

CLAIMS

1. A contact plate comprising

(a) a circular dish supported on a
circular base, said dish having a
bottom plate and a bottom cylindrical
side wall, and

(b) a circular lid having a top plate and
a top cylindrical side wall, said lid
sized so as to fit over the bottom
cylindrical side wall of said dish

wherein said base and said lid are provided with locking
means for securing said base and lid in locking
engagement, said locking means comprising at least two
pairs of locking members, each of said pairs of locking
members comprising (i) a radial sheath having an entry,
and (ii) an elongate radial tab sized and shaped so as to
be slidably engagable with said radial sheath.

2. The contact plate of claim 1 wherein said
radial tab has at least one protrusion and said radial sheath
has at least one indent, with said protrusion and said indent
being sized and located so as matingly engage each other.

3. The contact plate of claim 2 wherein said at
least one protrusion is proximal to the entry of said
sheath and said at least one indent is distal to the
entry of said sheath.

4. The contact plate of claim 3 wherein said tab
has two protrusions.

5. The contact plate of claim 5 wherein said sheath is integral with said base and said tab is integral with said top cylindrical side wall.

5 6. The contact plate of claim 5 wherein said sheath and said tab are slidably engagable with each other by rotating said lid relative to said base.

10 7. The contact plate of claim 6 wherein said sheath and said tab are slidably disengagable from each other by rotating said lid relative to said base.

15 8. The contact plate of claim 5 wherein said sheath has a closed end distal to said entry.

9. The contact plate of claim 8 wherein said lid is transparent.

20 10. The contact plate of claim 9 wherein said base has a multiplicity of spacers around its periphery to prevent said lid from sealingly engaging said base.

25 11. The contact plate of claim 10 wherein said dish contains microorganism growth medium.

12. The contact plate of claim 11 packaged in sterile packaging.